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*New home constructed by the owner under the Mutual Aid Housing program.*

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an impact, however. Low-rent home consruction programs have been funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; fifty such units were completed and accepted in 1966 and another fifty-five were nearing completion during the summer of 1970. Construction had started during that summer of fifty middle income rental homes financed by a tribal investment of land and F.H.A. supported loans. In another program, the Housing Authority, supported by the U.S. Federal Housing Assistance Administration began Mutual Help Housing construction. The first units under this program were occupied in 1965 and additional units have been completed and occupied in each succeeding year in Browning, Babb, and Starr School. This is a cooperative endeavor drawing on the resources of many agencies. The F.H.A.A. made a loan for the purchase of material and wages for supervisory labor, the B.I.A. provided general supervisory help, the tribe through the Housing Authority selected the candidates for home ownership. The purchasers contributed their labor to build their own house and to help their neighbors, and agreed to pay off the loan with small monthly payments geared to the family income. No one buyer could occupy his house until all houses of any one segment of the program were finished. These projects take time; the faster builder awaits the slower, but with cooperation the job gets done.

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Other tribal investments of land combined with federal loan programs have resulted in the completion of a new tribal office and community center and a new modern jail.

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The attention of both the tribe and the B.I.A. has recently turned to the development of the tourist potential of the reservation. For many years the Blackfeet have been aware of the tourists. Many have earned money as entertainers at the lodges of Glacier National Park, others have profited from the sale of Indian crafts to tourists passing through the reservation to and from the park. The Museum of the Plains Indian has attracted an ever increasing number of visitors since its opening in 1941, and the Blackfeet Arts and Crafts Association has supplied and sold local Indian work through the museum gift shop and through its own shop at St. Mary.

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[p. 62]

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657 public settlement. An appropriation was included for the construction
[425] of an irrigation system for the lands to be allotted.[115] Allotment
[653] surveys and work on the irrigation projects were begun in the two years
[464] following the enactment of the legislation.[116] Irrigation construction provided an additional source of labor and income for many Indians.

657 The last annuities under the agreement of 1896 were paid in
433 1908. Henceforth Indian rations and aid were dependent upon tribal income, reimbursable government appropriations, and occasional relief measures. The unanalyzed statistics from the Agents' reports for the next few years give a picture of continuing economic progress for the tribe as a whole.

[464] The first World War relieved some of the pressure on reservation
[722] resources--good weather and abundant crops prevailed generally until 1917; livestock and produce found a ready market at high prices; and many Blackfeet were drawn into the armed forces, thereby reducing the local labor force. But all of this does not reflect accurately the condition of individuals. A process was going on that was slowly segmenting the population.

162 First, the population was growing--from 2,063 in 1905[117] to
563 2,957 in 1920--and becoming increasingly hybridized. Of the total, in 1920, less than half, or 1,141 persons, were full-bloods, while the balance were mixed. Among the mixed-blood population 956 were one-half

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[115] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1907, XXXIV, p. 1035.

[116] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1908, p. 61; 1909, pp. 4-5.

[117] Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, op. cit., 1905, facing p. 16.

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[1884-1960]

653 657 In 1933 the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) programs were established to meet national unemployment and the benefits were extended to Indian [464] reservations.[133] Like the irrigation construction of earlier years, these programs provided a source of seasonal cash labor, an important prop to the economy, but one that provided little training for permanent employment on the reservation.

648 At this point in Blackfeet adaptation, new national Indian policies were being formulated. The Merian Report, a monumental study of the Indian problems published in 1928, questioned the whole doctrine of assimilation of the Indians.

> He who wishes to merge into the social and economic life of the prevailing civilization of this country should be given all practicable aid and advice in making the necessary adjustments. He who wants to remain an Indian and live according to his old culture should be aided in doing so.[134]

648 657 This, and many other of the recommendations, became official policy with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934.[135] [425] The act provided, among other things, for the cessation of allotment [426] of Indian land, a limitation on the sale of restricted Indian land to others than tribal members, and the establishment of a revolving loan fund from which Indian corporations could borrow to further either tribal or individual enterprises. Tribes were authorized to organize

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[133] U.S., Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1937, p. 218.

[134] Lewis Merian et al., The Problem of Indian Administration, Institute for Government Research (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1928), p. 28.

[135] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1934, XLVIII, p. 984.

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like other Indians, were still leasing the land to others rather than using it themselves.[153] The C.C.C. remained an important economic prop.

The war years, 1942 to 1945, had far-reaching effects on the Blackfeet. The C.C.C. program was suspended in 1942,[154] but several hundred young men and women served in the armed forces and worked in defense plants around the country.[155] Ready markets and higher prices for farm products coincided with increased rainfall to bring general prosperity to the Montana farmers and ranchers,[156] and the Blackfeet shared in this. The "greatest exodus of Indians from reservations that has ever taken place" also occurred during the war years.[157] Indians were meeting other Americans, learning new skills, and seeing more of the outside world.

Like all past periods of activity and increased economic advance, this one met reversals after the war. The greater number of the Indians returned to the reservation when the military forces were demobilized and the war industries were closed.[158] Wage work fell off and a "downward trend in family incomes set in."[159]

The young people returned with money to spend, but the opportunities for investment were scarce. Few of them owned land with which to start a ranch or farm. They had the money to build new homes,

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[153] Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1941, pp. 451-452.

[154] Ibid., 1943, p. 317. [155] Ewers, 1958, op. cit., p. 324.

[156] Toole, op. cit., p. 241.

[157] Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1944, p. 237.

[158] Ibid., 1946, p. 353. [159] Ibid., p. 351.